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ABSTRACT

A random sample of 1184 graduates of University of California (UC) Davis from calendar year 1973 was contacted to collect data about long-term career outcomes and attachment to UC Davis. Approximately 59% of the sample responded. Data from the sample are presented to illustrate: graduates who have undertaken some graduate level coursework or have completed a postgraduate degree program, gender differences in patterns of postgraduate pursuits, degrees earned, sources of postgraduate degrees, ratings of preparedness for postgraduate study, employment status by gender and full-time/part-time status, career choices by gender, mean and median annual salaries by highest degree earned and by gender, satisfaction with aspects of the undergraduate experience, and changes graduates would make in their academic programs if they were considering college today. It is concluded that UC Davis provides high quality undergraduate instruction and prepares students well for graduate school, and that UC Davis graduates achieve the goals they express as freshmen in the years beyond their baccalaureates. (JDD)

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RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

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THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, OCCUPATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS OF UC DAVIS

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INTRODUCTION

Institutions of postsecondary education measure their success, in part, by the degree to which graduating students achieve their educational and career goals. In order to assess the extent to which UC Davis baccalaureate degree recipients attain their goals, Student Affairs Research and Information began in 1977 to study postgraduate employment and educational outcomes of graduates from the class of 1973.

Originally, this research sought to collect initial employment data and to determine the level of postgraduate degree attainment, which can take ten years or more for some programs. Subsequent surveys in 1980 and 1984 also asked alumni about long-term career outcomes and, in 1988, about attachment to UC Davis, as measured by satisfaction ratings with aspects of their undergraduate experience. We did not design the research to provide information about how and why graduates come to make educational or career choices nor to account for their activities in the years between surveys. Consequently, the findings below present illuminating snapshots of alumni' outcomes rather than a complete picture of them.

In spring 1988 we conducted the most recent study of 1973 alumni. We mailed survey materials in three waves to a random sample of 1184 graduates from calendar year 1973; approximately 59% of these graduates responded. Respondents correspond to the survey population in gender and field of study; despite these similarities and the high response rate, however, they may differ from all graduates in attitudes or experiences. Therefore, exercise caution in extrapolating these results to the entire class.

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POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

UC Davis undergraduates consistently cite preparation for graduate school as an important goal. Approximately 64% of freshmen entering in Fall 1968 (and even larger proportions of succeeding freshman classes) said they planned to pursue a graduate degree. The data presented below affirm that Davis graduates attain this goal. Seventy percent of 1973 graduates have undertaken some graduate level coursework and most have completed a postgraduate degree program.

A comparison of 1973 graduates four, seven, eleven and fifteen years after graduation reveals the following pattern of postgraduate degree attainment:

	Years Since Graduation			
	Four	Seven	Eleven	Fifteen
Percent with Postgraduate Degree	35%	52%	58%	64%

Two-thirds of Davis graduates had earned a postgraduate degree or were enrolled in a degree program at the time of the survey. As the data on Table 1 below indicate, similar proportions of men and women eventually pursue postgraduate study.

TABLE 1
Postgraduate Degree Progress
1973 Alumni Fifteen Years after Graduation

	Men (n=369)	Women (n=324)	Total (n=693)
One or More Degrees	65 %	62 %	64 %
Still in Degree Program	1	6	4

As further shown in Table 2 below, men and women differ in their patterns of postgraduate degree pursuit and completion. Men enter graduate programs and complete their degrees earlier, while women are more likely than men to be enrolled in graduate programs fifteen years after graduation.

TABLE 2
Postgraduate Degree Progress
Four, Seven, Eleven and Fifteen Years Later

	Years Since Graduation			
	Four	Seven	Eleven	Fifteen
Completed or Pursuing Degree				
Men	49 %	63 %	65 %	66 %
Women	42	55	60	68

Table 3 shows the highest degrees earned or in progress for 1973 graduates. Both men and women report master's degrees most frequently as their highest degree earned. This finding held true for men in earlier surveys but represents a shift for women away from holding teaching credentials as their highest degree. In 1980, 43% of the 1973 women graduates who pursued postgraduate studies obtained a teaching credential. By 1988 most women (66%) who pursued postgraduate work had earned master's or doctorate degrees, while only 24% indicated a teaching credential as their highest degree.

TABLE 3
Distribution of Highest Degrees Earned
(by percent of graduates[1] who continued their education)

	Men (n=223)	Women (n=185)	Total (n=408)
Master's Degree	43%	48%	45%
Professional Doctorate	24	9	17
Law	*9*	*4*	*7*
Medicine	*6*	*3*	*4*
Veterinary Medicine	*9*	*2*	*6*
Academic Doctorate	22	9	16
Teaching Credential	4	24	14
Other[2] Degree	5	9	7

[1] This table counts graduates only once; e.g., an individual with master's and doctoral degrees appears only under the doctorate category. Approximately 45% of the respondents hold more than one postgraduate degree.
[2] Includes medical, business and other credentials.

Not surprisingly, the proportion of academic doctorates earned by 1973 graduates increased dramatically between 1980 and 1988 (from 5% to 16%), while the proportion of professional degrees earned remained stable (17%). As found in earlier studies, men more commonly acquire degrees higher than a master's degree than women. In particular, men with MDs, JDs and academic doctorates outnumber women by at least 2 to 1.

The 1980 and 1984 survey results indicated that graduates in Biological Sciences, Animal Sciences, Physical Sciences and Letters enroll in graduate school at more than average rates. Results from 1988 confirm this pattern; 81% of Biological Sciences graduates, 79% of Animal Sciences graduates, 74% of Physical Sciences graduates and 71% of Letters graduates earned at least one postgraduate degree, compared with 64% of all respondents.

The largest number of respondents earned degrees in education (21%), followed by professional health fields (19%), and biological or physical science fields (16%). Men hold degrees most frequently in health (25%), biological or physical sciences (20%), and engineering (12%). By comparison, women earned degrees most frequently in education (37%), social science or humanities (16%), and business (15%).

TABLE 4
Source of Postgraduate Degrees and Credentials
(by percent of degrees)

University of California		Other California Schools		Out of State	Other
Davis	Other UC	State	Private	Schools	Sources
30%	10%	20%	13%	19%	9%

The University of California awarded most (40%) of the postgraduate degrees earned by 1973 UC Davis graduates (see Table 4 above). Davis graduates choose UC Davis most frequently for postgraduate work; 30% of graduate degrees earned by the class of 1973 came from their alma mater.

Because so many Davis alumni attend graduate school, the perception of preparedness for graduate work held by alumni provides an important measure of institutional success. When asked to rate how well their undergraduate work at UC Davis prepared them for postgraduate study, three-fourths of 1973 graduates report that it prepared them *very well* or *more than adequately* for graduate study (Table 5). A somewhat smaller proportion (65%) report that their most recent field of study is *highly* or *moderately related* to their undergraduate majors.

TABLE 5
Ratings of Preparedness for Postgraduate Study
(by percent of graduates who continued their education)

Very Well	Adequately	More than Adequately	Less than Adequately	Poorly
48%	26%	22%	3%	1%

CAREER OUTCOMES

Fifteen years after graduation, 96% of men and 53% of women from the class of 1973 worked full-time. An additional 27% of the women worked in part-time jobs (Table 6). Most women not working at the time of the survey described themselves as full-time homemakers; this group represents 17% of all women graduates.

TABLE 6
Employment Status by Gender

	Men (n=369)	Women (n=324)
Working Full-time	96 %	53 %
Working Part-time	2	27
Not Working	2	20

What kinds of careers did incoming freshmen envision when they came to UC Davis in the late 1960s? Freshmen entering in 1968 planned to work primarily as doctors or other health professionals (23%), as school teachers (16%), engineers (9%), research scientists or professors (7%), or lawyers (5%). Succeeding groups of incoming freshmen reported similar commitments to careers in health, science and engineering, while careers in education decreased in popularity and interest in business careers surged.

Although individual career paths may have diverged widely from those originally intended, as a class 1973 graduates report working in careers close to those anticipated by incoming freshmen of the late 1960s. Careers in health science, research, engineering and education account for half of the full-time jobs held by 1973 graduates, as shown in Table 7 (page following). Business is the largest single career field. A third of graduates in business come from science or engineering backgrounds and work for firms or public agencies specializing in these areas. Of the remaining graduates in business fields, most work in financial services, sales or advertising. About 8% of male and 3% of female graduates own small businesses.

TABLE 7
Full-time Career Choices by Gender
(by percent of graduates employed full-time)

	Men (n=351)	Women (n=172)	Total (n=523)
Business	26%	33%	28%
Health Professions	16	10	14
Science/Research [1]	14	11	13
Engineering	17	1	12
Elementary/Secondary Education	6	20	11
Law	6	2	5
Social Services [2]	4	9	5
Farm/Fisheries/Forestry	6	2	5
Other	3	9	5
Applied Arts/Letters	2	3	2

[1] Includes university professors.
[2] Primarily administrators or analysts for public agencies.

One measure of career progress for graduates is whether or not they can secure employment in their fields of choice. When asked if they worked in their chosen field, close to 90% of 1973 graduates responded affirmatively. Only 2% of graduates employed full-time were undecided about career fields.

In addition, the survey asked graduates working full-time to rate how well their undergraduate education prepared them for their present position. Despite the fact that fifteen years had passed since receiving their baccalaureates, a majority of 1973 graduates (56%) responded that UC Davis prepared them *very well* or *more than adequately* for their current job. Eighty percent of these graduates work in fields somewhat related to their undergraduate majors.

For several reasons, salary data provided by the survey represent a more problematic measurement of career progress. The survey provides no information on job mobility or time in the labor market and both the general categories identifying occupation and the specific job titles provided by respondents proved difficult to interpret. Consequently, we do not present salaries by career category. Overall, the mean annual salary for 1973 graduates employed full-time in spring 1988 was $49,452, about $15,000 higher than reported by them in 1984.

Salary data can be viewed more usefully by reference to the highest degree earned. Table 8 below lists the mean and median annual salaries of graduates by their highest level of education. Because the constraints discussed above limit these data, they should be interpreted very broadly. Graduates with professional degrees report the highest salaries, followed by graduates with academic doctorates.

Women graduates across all degree categories report lower salaries than men. But this finding should be interpreted cautiously, particularly because these women (most now in their late 30s) likely stopped out of the job market to bear and raise children or made career choices compatible with those responsibilities. Also, as indicated earlier, many women from this class earned advanced degrees later in life than their male cohorts.

TABLE 8
Mean and Median Annual Salaries of Graduates Employed Full-time
(by highest degree earned and gender)

	BA/BS	Teaching Credential	MA/MS	PhD	Professional Degree
MEN					
Mean Salary	$49,911	$36,531	$48,837	$57,879	$69,247
Median Salary	45,000	34,000	46,000	55,750	57,000
WOMEN					
Mean Salary	$35,316	$28,309	$36,606	$47,414	$45,039
Median Salary	32,000	27,200	33,800	50,000	38,000
TOTAL					
Mean Salary	$45,279	$31,363	$43,914	$56,032	$67,781
Median Salary	41,000	34,000	38,900	50,000	51,000

TABLE 9
Satisfaction with Aspects of the Undergraduate Experience

UC DAVIS	Very Satisfied or Satisfied	Neutral or Mixed Feelings	Very Dissatisfied or Dissatisfied	Mean Ratings
Academic Programs	91 %	7 %	2 %	1.63
Total Experience	85	13	2	1.81
Faculty Instruction	82	14	4	1.89
Social Experiences	74	19	7	1.98
Student Services	71	25	4	2.09
Teaching Assistant Instruction	55	36	10	2.45

IMPRESSIONS OF UC DAVIS

The 1988 survey asked graduates, for the first time, to rate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of their undergraduate experience at Davis. Data on Table 9 above indicate that these alumni remain very enthusiastic about their years at Davis. The survey requested them to report satisfaction levels, using a five point scale from 1 (*very satisfied*) to 5 (*very dissatisfied*). Graduates particularly expressed satisfaction with the quality of academic programs, their total undergraduate experience and with instruction they received from faculty.

Although very satisfied with their undergraduate years generally, three-fourths of these alumni said they would make changes in their programs if they were considering college today. As shown on Table 10 below, the single change graduates would most likely make would be in their major. Fifteen years after graduation, 1973 alumni remain very attached to UC Davis; if considering college today, with the advantage of their present knowledge and experience, 86% of these graduates would choose to attend UC Davis again.

TABLE 10
If you were considering college today, with the advantage of your present knowledge and experience, would you:

	Percent Responding
Change your major?	40 %
Take greater advantage of internships?	34
Take a broader range of courses?	29
Take a more specialized course of study?	23
Change schools?	14
Take more individual study courses?	13
Not attend college?	0
Do it all the same way?	26

CONCLUSION

As a major research university, UC Davis functions to prepare students for graduate school. Data from the class of 1973 indicate that, when measured by postgraduate degree attainment and by the perceptions of alumni, UC Davis does an extraordinary job in this regard.

About two-thirds of 1973 graduates have completed a postgraduate degree program and the majority of these graduates report being prepared *very well* or *more than adequately* for their studies. In addition, the small difference between degree completion (64%) and graduate course enrollment (70%) for these students indicates a strong commitment on their part to persistence to degree.

Another primary function of UC Davis is to provide high quality undergraduate instruction. In addition to the postgraduate educational achievements of graduates, career outcomes provide several indirect measures of how well the University performs this function. Almost 90% of 1973 graduates secured employment in their fields of choice.

Remarkably, a majority of graduates report that their undergraduate work prepared them *very well* or *more than adequately* for their present position, even after fifteen years during which they may have held several different jobs and attained various types of postgraduate degrees. When asked about their satisfaction with the quality of instruction provided by faculty, over 80% of graduates say they are *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with this aspect of their undergraduate experience. Over 90% are *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the quality of their academic programs.

But undergraduate life does not revolve exclusively around the classroom, and the Davis campus, therefore, offers a wide variety of out-of-class experiences. When asked how satisfied they were with the quality of their social experiences and with the student services Davis provided, over 70% of alumni said they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* in these areas. Although some graduates expressed *mixed feelings* about these qualities, few were actually *dissatisfied*.

Findings from the surveys of 1973 graduates provide evidence that UC Davis undergraduates seriously commit themselves to attain degrees beyond the baccalaureate and to become doctors, scientists, engineers, lawyers and educators. They achieve the goals they express as freshmen in the years beyond their baccalaureates. In addition to reporting that UC Davis provided them with the appropriate education to meet their goals, alumni from this class report high levels of satisfaction with their undergraduate experience and a positive attachment to the university.

To: